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21 NOV 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence
SUBJECT: Evaluation of CINCPAC Assessment of Effects
of Ceaseation of Bombing Attack Against NVN

1. The attachment was prepared in response to your request that the DCI be provided an evaluation of the CINCPAC assessment of the effects of a bombing cessation. The evaluation is an agreed statement of this Office and OCL.
2. Although you directed that our evaluation not consider political aspects, we received subsequently Part II of the CINCPAC assessment which went into political and psychological effects. We felt, therefore, that some consideration of these assessments was warranted and have incorporated the views of OCL on these questions.

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WILLIAM H. McPHERSON, JR.
Director
Economic Research

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Attachment:
Comments on CINCPAC Assessment
of Effects of Ceaseation of Bombing
Attack Against NVN.

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Document 1
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downgrading and
declassification

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OSD review(s) completed.

Comment on CINCPAC Assessment of Effects
of Ceasation of Bombing Attack Against NVN

1. This paper evaluates a CINCPAC assessment of the effects of a cessation of bombing against North Vietnam.

General Comment

2. The CINCPAC assessment over-simplifies and overstates the effects of a halt in the bombing. In addition, several of its factual statements are in error. The CINCPAC evaluation of the political and psychological effects is an inadequate treatment of a highly complex issue. CINCPAC also presents an exaggerated picture of the ease with which Hanoi could take advantage of a cessation in the bombing to restore or to improve its military and economic capabilities to carry on the war in the South.

3. The report treats inadequately -- or not at all -- such pertinent factors as the manner in which the cessation of bombing is presented and carried out; the extent to which NVN reactions will be determined by Hanoi's judgment of the probable duration of a bombing halt; and the capabilities of allied ground forces to restrict or to disrupt possible Communist military moves in the South.

Specific Comments

Economic Effects

4. CINCPAC's assumption that a rebuilding of the economy would be initiated immediately upon a cessation of the bombing is unrealistic. Hanoi would probably choose to step up the reconstruction of LOC's and industrial facilities that could be repaired quickly and contribute most to the war effort. We regard it unlikely that extensive reconstruction of all modern industry would be undertaken unless Hanoi was at least certain that the bombing cessation was permanent and had some reasonable expectation that a permanent settlement of the war was imminent.

5. The assessment of recovery in the modern industrial sector understates the time that will be required to fully restore industry to pre-strike levels of operation. Recovery will be heavily dependent on foreign aid. Although specific major facilities, such as power plants or the Haiphong cement plant, could probably be restored to partial operation within relatively short periods of time, an across-the-board restoration of industry would require, conservatively, at least two years to organize and to carry out.

6. An estimated 50 percent of damaged electric generating capacity could be restored to service within 6 months, but complete restoration will take about 2 years. It will take at least one year for recovery in the textile industry, involving either relocation of

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dispersed textile machinery or installation of new machinery, and major reconstruction of the largest plant. More than one year will be required to rebuild the Haiphong cement plant. Bomb damage to other industry probably could be repaired in 3 to 6 months.

7. The restoration of bulk PCL storage capacity would have a relatively low priority since the present system is adequate, and bulk storage would be extremely vulnerable in the event that air attacks were renewed.

8. We estimate that the major interdicted LCC's would be quickly repaired but do not agree with CINCPAC's estimate that they could be restored to full use in a matter of weeks. The initial through serviceability of any LCC, after the bombing stopped, would still require use of temporary bridges or other lower capacity alternate crossings. A new permanent bridge would generally require 3 to 6 months for construction. Permanent repair of all major bridges would require much longer. The Vinh line, for example, could not be operated at full pre-strike capacity until the load factor on all bridges was raised to their original capacity.

9. CINCPAC overstates the extent to which Haiphong has been isolated. Traffic moving out of Haiphong has been slowed down and a greater effort is required to move it, but there is no indication that the accumulation of goods at Haiphong has increased since the land routes to the interior have been attacked.

10. The CINCPAC assessment of the effects in transportation contains several errors. The estimate of the capacity of the Hanoi-Vinh line should be 1,800 rather than 200 short tons per day. This line, moreover, has never been completely inoperable since the bombing began. We estimate that during the past Tet bombing pause North Vietnam moved about 15,000-20,000 tons rather than 25,000 tons, south of the 18th parallel.

11. CINCPAC's statement that a wealth of manpower would be available for redirection in the war effort is a gross exaggeration. The number of North Vietnamese diverted to full-time and part-time war related activities caused by the bombings is only about 600,000. About half of the total are women and some are men too old to serve in the military. About 110,000 of the total are already in the military. Thus, the number of men that might be freed for military duty in Laos or South Vietnam by a cessation of bombing would appear to be much lower than implied.

12. The reduced rice harvests in 1966 and 1967 were probably due more to adverse weather than to war-related factors, although manpower diversions and transportation difficulties undoubtedly

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contributed. Weather is such a controlling factor in North Vietnam's agricultural output that it is not certain whether a successful harvest would follow a cessation of bombing. Nor is it certain that food imports would diminish. North Vietnam, normally a food deficit country, imported over 160,000 tons in 1964. Food imports in 1967 will amount to about 400,000 tons, two and a half times the pre-bombing level. Despite the bombing, food imports in 1966 were low -- 77,000 tons -- and a comparison of 1967 imports with those of 1966, is misleading.

Military Effects

13. CINCPAC states correctly that the NVN could increase significantly the flow of supplies to the South and improve its capabilities for military operations from areas north of the DMZ and in South Vietnam. It cannot be demonstrated, however, that the present air war has put a relevant cap on the forces that the communists can support in the South or on the enemy's ability to build up stockpiles in the South or in Laos. A cessation of the bombing would not alleviate one of the major and growing problems in the South -- the internal transport and resupply of combat units in the South in face of intensified allied ground operation.

14. Hanoi's attainment of a military advantage in the South is determined essentially by the capability of allied forces to contain Communist activities. A bombing halt, in itself, cannot give Hanoi such an advantage. CINCPAC's assessment of possible military actions by the North Vietnamese also fails to acknowledge that the possibility of a renewal of the bombing could put a meaningful damper on the extent to which Hanoi would seek to escalate the war in the South, or to increase its use of the area North of the DMZ for artillery or air operations.

15. Finally, we would note that stockpiling of military supplies "just north of the DMZ" would not greatly expand the movement through Laos, except over the trails that extend around and through the DMZ into Laos. Route 137 enters Laos about 35 miles north of the DMZ.

Political and Psychological Effects

16. A bombing cessation might raise false hopes in the world of an early settlement of the conflict, but this would depend entirely on how the US pressed its case. Hanoi certainly would evade any settlement, except on its own terms. North Vietnam has insisted all along, as one of its Four Points, that foreign troops must leave Vietnam. It would continue to do so after a bombing halt. There is no reason to assume, as CINCPAC does, that Hanoi's demands would find a more sympathetic audience after a bombing halt. On the

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contrary, there almost certainly would be considerable pressure put on North Vietnam to modify its own intransigent terms for a settlement.

17. We agree that Hanoi would interpret a cessation as a weakening of US resolve and a tacit acknowledgement that the bombing was not accomplishing its objectives. Hanoi would continue fighting in the south, but it would not entertain any hope of defeating the US military, having abandoned this hope long ago. It would continue to try to wear down the US through a whole series of battles, but it would be most unlikely to pin all its hopes on any single, decisive battle.

18. We do not dispute the essential conclusion that in the absence of US political concessions, a bombing halt would not cause Hanoi either to stop its activities in the South or to enter serious negotiations.

19. Hanoi's reaction to a bombing cessation must be viewed, however, in the light of its primary objective of bringing all South Vietnam under Communist control. Hanoi realizes that its only hope for a favorable solution lies in a modification of US objectives in the South. A cessation of bombing, would be seen as a significant step in the right direction, but North Vietnam would be wary of relying on such a judgment until they had further tested US intentions in the South. If North Vietnam concluded that the US was not prepared to make further concessions, it probably would resist involvement in any serious negotiations and prepare to continue the struggle whether the bombing resumed or not. Hanoi doubtless would seek to maintain the advantages of a bombing cessation, perhaps even by engaging in some form of talks in the hope that international and domestic pressure on the US would inhibit a decision to start the bombings again. North Vietnam would continue to consider the bombings an indecisive element in the war, however, and would not compromise any essential element in its position just to maintain the cessation.

CIA/CER
21 November 1967

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